

**Negotiating Extra-Territorial Citizenship:  
Mexican Migrants and the Transborder Politics of Community**

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## **Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

The dominant model of modern liberal citizenship, in which political identity and membership are congruent with the state's territory, is increasingly unable to resolve the contradictions created by global mass migration. While scholars have studied this problem from the perspective of immigrant-receiving countries, they have paid little attention to citizenship models that would explain how migrants relate to their sending countries. This paper draws on evidence from ethnographic fieldwork in Michoacán, Mexico, and Southern California to propose a process-based model of extra-territorial citizenship in which migrants claim citizenship in their places of origin, even when they are physically absent. Migrants make these claims through public displays in sending communities and in their interactions with Mexican political institutions and the Catholic Church.

Legal rights of citizenship, such as voting from abroad, and a kind of moral citizenship in communities of origin share similar theoretical principles. Extra-territorial citizenship appeals to a Roman model of citizenship. A Greek model of citizenship rejects extra-territorial citizenship based on the implausibility of daily participation in the public life of the community without a physical presence. Both forms of citizenship are negotiated with non-migrants who selectively accept or reject the principles of extra-territorial citizenship. While I develop this model based on the experiences of particular migrant communities, the model may be applicable to other migration contexts.

## **Problems of Citizenship and Migration**

Discussions of international migrants and citizenship generally revolve around migrants' relationship to their receiving country (Jacobson 1996; Kymlicka 1995; Plotke 1999). Migrants may live in a country for years without becoming citizens, thus creating a

disjuncture between residence and membership in the polity (Brubaker 1989). In countries of mass immigration and low naturalization rates, the population inside the state's borders varies significantly from the population of legally and culturally recognized national citizens. Although politicians and some scholars warn that granting non-citizens many of the same rights as citizens "devalues citizenship" (Schuck 1989), configurations of truncated membership may be recognized for residents who are not legally citizens (Miller 1989). Yasemin Soysal has argued there is a new "postnational" model of citizenship that is based on global rights norms and the devolution of state power to supra-national arrangements like the European Union (EU). Non-citizen residents of a state can claim civil, social, and even limited political rights, based on discourses of universal personhood. National identity is no longer linked to the right to make claims on the polity (Soysal 1994).

Often left obscured in these discussions is an understanding of how migrants with strong ties across state borders challenge nation-state models of citizenship in *sending* states as well. Migrants often live in a country in which they do not claim citizenship, and claim citizenship in a country in which they do not live. Alternatively, they may claim membership in multiple polities in which they may be residents, part-time residents, or absentees.

The bundle of ties linking migrants to their societies of origin and settlement have become known in migration studies as 'transnational' practices and attitudes. These ties are called 'transnational' "to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders" (Basch et al. 1994). 'Transnationalism' is a notoriously slippery concept, and much of the recent literature attempts to specify and narrow the meaning of the term. Important distinctions have been drawn between 'weak' and 'strong' forms of transnationalism and the degree to which practices have been

institutionalized (Portes et al. 1999; Itzigsohn et al. 1999). Even more useful would be to recognize that a variety of cross-border links between migrants and their places of origin and settlement are a generic feature of international migration. The degree of cross-border connectivity is highly variable in both its intensity and consequentiality along multiple dimensions of economics, politics, and culture. In other words, all migrants are more or less connected in different ways. Rather than attempting to force a dichotomous categorization of a migrant or practice as ‘transnational’ or not, or even creating a new category of ‘transmigrant’ (Glick Schiller 1999), it would be more useful to extend the distinctions between strong and weak forms of ‘transnationalism’ to describe a continuous variable of cross-border connectivity. Roger Waldinger has suggested calling such a variable ‘transnationality’.<sup>2</sup> Transnationality is simply the quality of being connected to both ‘here’ and ‘there’, which can range in intensity from severed ties to regular interaction.

The concept of ‘transnational’ in all of its variations has less analytical leverage in the study of cross-border migrant *politics*, however. A question that is rarely asked, and even more rarely answered, is where to locate the ‘national’ in ‘transnationalism’. The notion of ties crossing “national borders” confuses the borders that are crossed. The ties in question are generally across *state* borders. To understand the different forms of cross-border migrant ties, it is imperative to specify the relationships among states, putative nations, and migrants. If students of politics use ‘transnational’ as carelessly as they have used ‘international’, when the more precise meaning of the latter is ‘inter-state’ (Akzin 1966), ‘transnational’ will lose whatever analytic traction it has. The distinction between trans-state and transnational is not critical when discussing economic or religious linkages, but more nuanced and precise vocabulary is needed to analyze the cross-border political ties of contemporary migrants. This is not merely semantic quibbling. The relationship

between nation and state is a crucial question in the study of nationalism. The geographic borders of the state must be distinguished from the conceptual borders of the nation before we can begin to understand the politics of migrant inclusion and exclusion.

When I refer to ‘borders’ without further qualification, I mean the geographic and political borders that divide the world into a system of states. For our purposes, these borders are fixed and clearly defined.<sup>3</sup> Control over a bounded territory is a constitutive feature of states. The ideal type of the *nation*-state is a polity where the boundaries of an ethno-cultural nation are congruent with the boundaries of state territory (Gellner 1983). Few nation-states firmly adhere to the ideal type. Some putative nations cross state boundaries, such as the German *volk* that is divided between Germany, Austria, and neighboring states (Brubaker 1989). Many states, such as Spain, are composed of multiple self-defined nations. Even where the ‘nation’ is conceived as the sum of state citizens (Akzin 1966), the borders of nation and state differ when there are large bodies of non-citizens residing in the polity or a large body of citizens residing outside the state’s borders.

Migrants living outside a nation-state’s borders who claim membership in ‘the nation’, or states who claim such migrants as ‘their’ own, are engaged in discourses and other practices of ‘transborder nationalism’ (Brubaker 1996).<sup>4</sup> The border being crossed is a *state*, not a national, border. To call transborder nationalism ‘transnational’ implies that a national border has been crossed or transcended. In fact, a transborder nationalist project invokes the wholeness of one ‘nation’ despite intervening state and geographic borders.

Members of a national community may also consider themselves simultaneous members of another ‘nation’. Migrants who feel an affinity to both sending and receiving ‘nations’, yet conceive of those ‘nations’ as distinct communities, are dual nationalists. The

legal concept of ‘dual nationality’ expresses a legal status, while ‘dual nationalism’ describes a discourse and political program of dual national affiliations.<sup>5</sup>

Dual nationalism and cross-border nationalism have been conflated in the migration literature as examples of “transnationalism” (Fitzgerald 2000; Portes et al. 1999). Michel Laguerre has called the sense of membership in more than one polity and an attachment to a distant homeland an instance of “diasporic citizenship” (Laguerre 1998). “Diasporic citizenship induces openness and prevents narrow nationalism because it elicits attachment to both the homeland and the country of residence” (18). The degree to which migrants are “attached” to *both* homeland and country of residence is variable, however. Although in some instances, migrants consider themselves dual nationals and engage in cross-border nationalist practices, the two phenomena are analytically distinct. Neither form of nationalism presupposes the other. One could think of one’s self as a dual national without leaving the state’s territory – for example, a self-defined member of both the Quebecois and Canadian ‘nations’. A second form of dual nationalism would be a migrant maintaining dual national ties across a state border. Dual nationalism would *not* characterize an émigré or sojourner migrant who is a transborder nationalist without any sense of belonging to the receiving country. Neither would dual nationalism characterize the nationalism of an immigrant who irrevocably severs ties with the former homeland.

Long periods of residence generally foster ties to *local* receiving communities, but these attachments may not be transferred to a perceived *national* community. Indeed, the strongest links described in the ‘transnational migration’ literature are often highly *localistic* ties binding migrants to particular sending sites and their satellites in the receiving country. Transborder local connections are embedded in macro structures, but the specifically ‘national’ element cannot be assumed.

Much of the postmodern literature on migrant ‘transnationalism’ celebrates the delinking of space from identity (Basch et al. 1994; Mahler 1998). The importance of particular places to identity formation should not be overlooked, however. Even ‘transnational’ identities are formed by emotional, political, and social attachments to specific places where the substantive practices of citizenship are enacted. To clarify the relationship between social identity and physical space, I use ‘community’ to mean an imagined group of members who share a collective identity (Anderson 1991). Communities often are based on attachments to a geographic place circumscribed by state or local boundaries. Yet those communities may also include members who do not inhabit the place. The *imagined* body of citizens may not be restricted to a given territory. Extra-territorial citizenship is citizenship in the political community without residence in the community’s home locality.

Community boundaries are ambiguous and subject to negotiation by recognized and prospective members. Migrants are likely to frame their claims to belong to their communities of origin within discourses of attachments to particular places. Such an identity often is claimed to be immutable, perhaps even for children of migrants born outside the homeland. In the model of *postnational* citizenship, particular identities, while perhaps persistent, become less relevant to politics as universal rights are created, accepted, and enacted. Regardless of the accuracy of the postnational model in describing the paradigmatic example of the EU<sup>6</sup>, migrants’ extra-territorial citizenship rights are legitimated by invoking particular identities. Blood and birthright, rather than appeals to universal rights, legitimate extra-territorial citizenship.

By extra-territorial citizenship, I do not only mean legal citizenship. Citizenship has a moral dimension that is not always congruent with juridical status. The extra-territorial

citizenship claims by Michoacano migrants in this study are primarily moral, though the underlying principles of these claims also are reflected in the national and cross-border debate in Mexico over legal extra-territorial citizenship rights. I will first describe how migrants assert a kind of moral citizenship in their towns and villages of origin before I apply the same model to the legal negotiation of extra-territorial citizenship on the national level.

## **Methods**

The ethnographic evidence discussed in this paper is based on four months of fieldwork conducted in 1999 and 2000 in the west-central Mexican state of Michoacán and satellite communities in Southern California with high concentrations of Michoacanos. The fieldwork in Michoacán was concentrated in two large mestizo towns with historically high emigration rates: Sahuayo (pop. 60,000) and Jiquilpan (pop. 37,000) (INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 1991). I also conducted research in the mestizo village of El Granjenal in the *municipio*<sup>7</sup> of Puruándiro (pop. 1000).<sup>8</sup> I attended Sahuayan and Jiquilpense migrant organization fund-raisers in California, migrant-sponsored public activities in Sahuayo, and the 2000 federal elections in Sahuayo, but most of the data was gathered from seventy semi-structured interviews and many informal conversations. Most interviews were recorded with extensive notes, while others were tape-recorded and then transcribed. Practically all the interviews and conversations were in Spanish.

Informants were selected to represent a broad political spectrum of elites and migrant leaders. Sahuayan informants included PRI, PAN, and PRD<sup>9</sup> officials; current and former leaders of Sahuayan migrant networks in Santa Ana, Los Angeles, Merced, and Chicago; priests; leaders of civic associations; journalists; and current and former migrants

whom I contacted using snowball sampling with diverse points of entry. Municipal officials, local elites, and migrant club leaders from Jiquilpan were interviewed in Jiquilpan and Inglewood. Community leaders, migrants, and the parish priest were interviewed in El Granjenal and Santa Ana. The majority of the informants were men between the ages of 30 and 65. I emphasize that the universe of migrants interviewed was restricted to those active or formerly active in transborder projects. Neither they nor the non-migrants are a representative sample of the population.

The interviews were driven by the following questions, with particular attention paid to differences between the responses of current migrants and political elites in the places of origin:

- What are the forms of migrants' collective cross-border participation in the public life of their place of origin?
- What motivates these collective practices?
- Are these practices political or potentially political?
- What are the discourses of rights and obligations for migrants in the public life of their place of origin?
- What is the relationship between these discourses and non-discursive practices?

### **Extra-Territorial Citizenship in the Sending Community**

Unlike most cases of Mexican migrant transborder collective action that have been studied (Goldring, forthcoming [2002]; Rivera Salgado 1999; Zabin and Escala Rabadan 1998; R. Smith 1995), migrants from two of the three Michoacano communities described here are not formally organized. Sahuayan migrants work through a number of separate,

informal networks to carry out projects in Sahuayo. For example, actors in one network sponsor one of the days of the Virgin of Guadalupe fiesta in December. A group of migrants returns to Sahuayo where they parade through the streets as a group to assert their Sahuayan identity publicly. As they march, they display symbols of Mexico and Sahuayo, such as a Mexican flag emblazoned with the name of the “Sahuayan Colony of the North”, banners of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and a banner showing the twin towers of the main cathedral in Sahuayo. The Colony sponsors fireworks, mariachi bands, and other fiesta expenses, as well as a luncheon and live music performance for prisoners in the town jail. In the past, the Colony has raised funds for a pharmacy, schoolrooms, church construction, and donations of food and clothing. With the exception of the branch of the Colony in Chicago that is registered with the Mexican consulate, the Colony’s branches in California cities with concentrations of Sahuayans are loosely organized and are not registered with either the U.S. or Mexican authorities.

Other networks of Sahuayans operate independently from the Colony of the North. The informal nature of Sahuayan transborder social projects is demonstrated by the following case from June 1999. During the workweek, a mechanic at a Santa Ana garage fixed cars and slept on the shop floor to save money to build his house in Sahuayo. On the weekends, he reverted to his role as president of a volunteer paramedic corps in Sahuayo called Cruz Ambar and tracked down other Sahuayan migrants to ask for contributions to buy an ambulance. He showed them a photograph of a second-hand 1988 Ford ambulance driving in a parade of migrants through the streets of Sahuayo with a poster taped to the rear window thanking the “colony and family of Sahuayans living in the United States”. The Cruz Ambar president raised \$5000 for the ambulance, but he spent three months negotiating with Mexican government agencies, the city of Santa Ana, and Mexican

migrant civic associations in an attempt to import the ambulance into Mexico without paying taxes. The Mexican government only allows tax-free imports from the United States for charity purposes if they are sponsored by a registered organization. Since there is not a formal association of Sahuayans in California registered with the U.S. government or Mexican consulate, Cruz Ambar could not bring an ambulance to Sahuayo until it found a used vehicle in another Mexican state. The \$5000 ambulance may not seem like a major purchase, but it is the only ambulance serving the public in a town of 60,000. Two years after buying the first ambulance, the Cruz Ambar president was back in Santa Ana seeking more donations.

The efforts of Sahuayan migrants to equip a Sahuayan hospital without cooperating with the Mexican state led to disastrous results, however. In the late 1980s, a delegation from a private Catholic hospital in Sahuayo that provides services at little or not cost came to Los Angeles and Santa Ana to raise money to buy secondhand medical equipment. A Sahuayan in Los Angeles arranged for the delegation to purchase equipment at reduced prices from a Los Angeles County clinic that was closing. To avoid paying taxes on importing the equipment to Mexico, the delegation sent a trailer-truck full of equipment to the border at Nuevo Laredo in the state of Tamaulipas. He chose Nuevo Laredo as the port of entry despite a detour of hundreds of miles from the most direct route. The delegation had Sahuayan contacts in Mexican customs there who could allow the equipment to pass without paying taxes. One hundred kilometers from Nuevo Laredo, the truck overturned. Almost all of the equipment was destroyed. When the damaged equipment eventually arrived at the hospital in Sahuayo, some of the doctors did not believe the story of the overturned truck. They suspected that members of the delegation or other doctors had sold the working equipment for profit and delivered the damaged equipment to avert suspicion.

Those claims could not be substantiated, but broken x-ray machines, incubators, anesthesia units and other pieces of useless equipment were still scattered around the hospital in 1999. After the incident, Sahuayans in Santa Ana and Los Angeles lost interest in raising funds and donating their time to hospital projects.

The experiences of Cruz Ambar and the hospital delegation suggest that transborder social projects involving the physical movement of goods across state borders are very difficult to carry out without at least minimal cooperation from the state. Even when hometown associations (HTAs) cooperate with the Mexican consulate, obtaining the paperwork from Mexican customs to transport goods for public projects can take months. Transborder networks have not superseded the state, which has a significant capacity to regulate transborder activities.

Sahuayans have pursued a more formal kind of mechanism for transborder projects by establishing a 'sister city' relationship. In the late 1970s, a group of Sahuayans living in Lancaster, California, visited the mayor of Sahuayo to propose that Lancaster and Sahuayo become sister cities. The governments of both cities agreed to the plan and exchanged delegations. In two visits to Lancaster, the Sahuayan delegation found few Sahuayans but was welcomed by migrants from Ocatlán and Poncitlán, in the state of Jalisco, near Sahuayo. Over the next five years, Lancaster donated a 1951 Ford fire truck, firefighting equipment rumored to have been diverted by a former Sahuayan municipal president, and a street sweeper. Since Sahuayans park their cars along the curb where trash tends to collect, the street sweeper drove up and down the middle of the main boulevard serving no useful function until it was given to Mexico City following the 1985 earthquake. City officials in Lancaster and Sahuayo no longer contact each other. With projects that do not take into

account the needs of Sahuayo and without mechanisms of accountability, the sister city relationship has not been very productive.

Sahuayan politicians interested in working with Sahuayan migrants cite the model of neighboring Jiquilpan when they discuss the possibility of becoming a sister city with Santa Ana, which is known as “Little Sahuayo” because of its large concentration of Sahuayans. Jiquilpan’s sister city in Inglewood, California, is the major satellite of Jiquilpan. A PRD municipal president initiated the Association of Jiquilpenses Living in the United States in 1996. Once the association was formed, the municipal president proposed to Inglewood city officials that Jiquilpan and Inglewood become sister cities. His overtures were unsuccessful until the association contacted a Cuban-American Inglewood city council member who took an interest in the club. With the help of the city councilman, the association and the municipal president were able to arrange a sister city agreement in which the cities exchanged two delegations. During the first visit to Jiquilpan, a Korean-American businessman accompanied the Inglewood delegation to look for investment opportunities that never materialized. Inglewood also donated used fire-fighting equipment and computers to Jiquilpan, though as of 1999, they had sat for over a year in storage in Inglewood because the proper import permits had not been arranged with Mexican customs. To efficiently move equipment across the border would require a more formal relationship between the HTA and the Mexican government at the federal as well as local level.

Despite setbacks, the sister city relationship carries advantages for the association. The association now has access to Inglewood city resources such as the free use of city property for Jiquilpense cultural events, as well as the less tangible benefit of increased legitimacy through its interaction with Inglewood city officials. While the association does

not officially endorse political candidates in the United States or Mexico, association members have campaigned for the re-election of the Cuban-American councilman. In general, there are weak links between Los Angeles-area Mexican hometown associations and California politicians (Zabin and Escala Rabadan 1998), but the case of Jiquilpan illustrates some of the potential benefits for the associations and political leaders in California.

The relationship between the hometown association and the municipal president in Jiquilpan is quite strong. Both the former PRD and the current PRI municipal presidents have visited Inglewood several times, primarily to attend the annual association ball and Miss Jiquilpan pageant at which funds are raised to support projects in Jiquilpan. In 1996, the association raised \$14,000 to renovate the Jiquilpan public market. The following year, the association raised \$5000 for a childcare center. Representatives of the association handed over a check to the treasurer at the Jiquilpan municipality and videotaped the transaction in order to prove that the funds were delivered to the city as promised. Migrants' use of videotapes to record government transactions and play them for contributors in the United States has been noted elsewhere as an example of a new technology creating greater accountability in transborder political practices (R. Smith 1995).

Despite the videotape and efforts to create accountability, there are rumors in Jiquilpan and Inglewood that some of the funds were diverted for illicit purposes. While these allegations are not proven, their widespread circulation has dampened the enthusiasm of Jiquilpenses in California to contribute to association fund-raising. All of the raised funds are now spent directly by the association when its board of directors visits Jiquilpan. In 1998, the association donated \$3000 worth of food and clothing to a home for indigent

seniors, a drug rehabilitation clinic, and low-income Jiquilpenses who were selected by board family members living in Jiquilpan. Although the municipal president offered the use of a city truck to deliver the donations, the municipality no longer controls the resources. Migrant contributions to the municipality are not legal obligations of citizenship like paying taxes. Residence outside the state's territory allows migrants to participate only when they feel that the municipality spends their funds responsibly.

Migrants, migrant associations, and government institutions are mutually dependent. The ability of migrants to produce resources outside the boundaries of the state, away from its coercive apparatus, has given migrants new leverage in their relationships with the state. Migrants abroad cannot force the Mexican government to become more accountable, but they can create incentives for greater government accountability through their ability to channel or restrict resources to public projects. Since HTAs in the United States have no coercive capacity that can be used against potential donors, the HTAs are also bound to the same requirements of accountability. Migrants are only likely to carry out successful projects in their communities of origin when there are mechanisms in place that create public trust in both the associations and relevant agencies of the Mexican state.

The potential for more substantial migrant projects is most notable in the case of Zacatecan hometown associations that work with the Mexican government at the local, state, and federal levels. The Zacatecan HTAs are organized in a federation comprised of clubs throughout the United States, including 50 in the Los Angeles area alone. The Federation has worked closely with the Zacatecan state government since 1985 when the Zacatecan governor visited Los Angeles. The visit led to the establishment of the Program for Zacatecanos Abroad, in which the state government matched funds raised by the HTAs to finance projects in their communities of origin. The relationship was strengthened under

the tenure of the succeeding governor when the 2 X 1 Program was established. Under 2 X 1, the federal and state governments each provided a matching dollar for every dollar raised by the Zacatecan federation to finance public works projects (Goldring 1999). In 1994, the entire contribution of the Federation, including matching funds, was \$2 million.<sup>10</sup> During the 1990s, 200 projects were completed, including street paving; water, electrification, and lighting projects; and the construction of sports facilities. In many communities, 2 X 1 funding was several times higher than regular official investment in public projects. The 2 X 1 program has since been replaced by a 3 X 1 program that includes federal, state, and municipal matching funds (Félix 1999; Guarnizo 1998; J. Smith 2001).

El Granjenal provides striking examples of transborder migrant collective action that are much more informal. The political structure of El Granjenal has been transplanted 1500 miles to a ‘satellite community’ in Santa Ana that is bigger than the community of origin. In 1999, the *encargado del orden* and his *suplente*<sup>11</sup> were long-term migrants who had houses in both Santa Ana and El Granjenal. The dual leadership structure allowed one of the encargados to travel to Santa Ana to work or visit family while the other minded the affairs of El Granjenal. Both men traveled back and forth across the border several times a year, shifting their class identities between economically successful elected officials in El Granjenal and working class migrants in Santa Ana.

Public works in El Granjenal, such as paving roads and installing drainage systems, are accomplished through the *faena* system of community labor. For example, if a street is being paved, the head of household of each house on the street is responsible for donating labor or money to the project. Absent migrant owners must send money to family members in El Granjenal to contract a day laborer to fulfill their duty. Returning migrants who have not fulfilled their duty are asked to compensate by performing other faenas. Although

village leaders claim that compliance is universal because of social pressure and migrants' good will, a 1999 village assembly to discuss public works drew angry comments from one man who claimed that the migrants do not fulfill their faenas.

Public assemblies in El Granjenal elect committee members to organize public projects. The committee members then select members of a fund-raising committee in Santa Ana. The members of the Santa Ana committee do not know they have been selected until migrants returning to Santa Ana from vacations in El Granjenal inform them. El Granjenal migrants have participated in every recent village project from building a public school to a water tank, even though the migrants are not formally organized or associated with the Mexican consulate, municipal government, or other state agencies.

As a direct consequence of migrants' continued involvement in their place of origin, El Granjenal has achieved a level of infrastructure development that is remarkably high relative to surrounding communities. The success of the transborder networks in El Granjenal may not be replicable in urban areas like Sahuayo and Jiquilpan, however. The system for developing projects in El Granjenal relies on a high level of social capital and trust that is created more easily in a village environment. Migrants from El Granjenal are also far more residentially and occupationally concentrated in the receiving locality than Jiquilpenses or Sahuayans. Migrants from El Granjenal are not trying to move physical goods across the border, so they are less beholden to a relationship with the state. The faena tradition, which is not operative in Jiquilpan or Sahuayo, allows migrants to contribute cash while the town provides the labor and supplies for projects. Further comparative studies should examine the extent to which size and density of the sending community, size and density of satellite concentrations, and available cultural resources like the faena predict differences in the forms and outcomes of cross-border hometown activities.

## **Negotiating Membership**

Scholars have described migrant participation in public projects in their places of origin as migrants' claims of membership (Goldring 1998; Basch et al. 1994). Membership is only constituted with other members, however, a point that has been understated by a literature on 'transnational migration' that has been concerned with introducing a sense of migrant agency into migration studies with much less consideration of community responses to claims-making.<sup>12</sup> Membership is claimed by a public affirmation of identity, but an affirmation by itself is not sufficient to achieve membership. Membership in a community is only achieved when other members of the community recognize an identity claim as legitimate (Taylor 1992). In other words, membership is achieved through the negotiation of (re) affirmations and confirmations of a collective identity. This is a negotiation over the formal aspect of membership. 'Formal' does not necessarily describe a legal standing, but rather "the status of membership in a political community ...[that] establishes who is and who is not a citizen, who owes allegiance to that community and is owed protection by it" (Holston 2001).

Membership is dynamic. It is subject to challenge and negotiation, especially in the context of transborder migration, where potential community members are often physically absent from the site of origin. Membership is also uneven. The outcome of (re) affirmations and recognitions of membership is expressed in different levels of membership. The level ranges from full enjoyment of civil, political and social rights (Marshall 1992) to symbolic membership with none of the Marshallian rights. By symbolic membership, I mean a recognized affirmation of collective identity that makes no substantive claims on other members of the community.

Symbolic membership by itself does not qualify as citizenship, because symbolic membership is not political. Symbolic members are not claiming to be part of a polity. For example, in Gan's famous formulation, third and fourth-generation Americans who assert a "symbolic ethnicity" declare their identity "by 'affiliating' with an abstract collectivity which does not exist as an interacting group. That collectivity... can be mythic or real, contemporary or historical." Distant homelands are especially attractive "identity symbols" since "they cannot make arduous demands on American ethnics" (Gans 1979). Neither do symbolic ethnics make demands on the homeland. Symbolic membership is not an assertion of citizenship, unless it is accompanied by claims to the rights of citizens. A citizen is a member of a community who makes claims on other members and whose right to make claims is accepted by other members of the community. Making claims on other members is inherently political in the Aristotelian sense of the act of ruling and being ruled (Pocock 1998).

Fundamentally, citizenship is the right to protection both from and by the political community (Holston 2001). The community that accepts other individuals or a group as citizens is undertaking an obligation to protect them and allow them the capacity to have an effective presence in the public space. In its moral essence, citizenship is the capacity to be heard (Balibar 1988). Michoacano migrants who participate in the public space of their towns of origin, even when they are physically absent most of the year, are asserting extra-territorial citizenship. They are asking to be "taken into account" by non-migrating members of the community. In Balibar's terms, they are demanding an effective presence in the public space.

To be taken into account means that one's interests are protected even during periods of absence. In the context of transborder migration, the protection of interests

includes private and public property rights and inclusive cultural rights. Private property rights are the rights to the protection of property such as land and houses. Throughout west-central Mexico, communities with historically high emigration rates are filled with empty houses that are only briefly occupied when migrants return for vacation or until they retire and move back to their place of origin (Massey et al. 1987). Public property rights include the right to participate in decisions that affect public infrastructure. Public property in the sending site continues to be an interest for many absent migrants. Even many so-called “settled immigrants” in receiving countries continue to view sending sites as centers for rest and relaxation, or retirement (Cornelius 1998). Absentees often continue to have an interest in the development of the town that is expressed through patronage of infrastructure projects like paving roads, building community centers, repairing cathedrals, and developing potable water systems (Goldring 1998, R. Smith 1995). When migrants return after decades of living in the United States, they sometimes expect and demand social services or facilities that their towns have never had (Félix 1999).

The right to be taken into account is also a cultural right. It is not a cultural right in Young’s sense of ‘differentiated citizenship’ (1989) that gives a social group special treatment in order to protect its difference (Kymlicka 1995; Taylor 1992). Rather, it is an inclusive cultural right to similar treatment based on a shared identity. Unlike the property interests that can be expressed through law as well as a normative code, this cultural right is purely a moral right. It is the right to be welcomed as a “good” member of the community, even after a period of extended absence in a foreign cultural milieu. Returnees who are taken into account are accepted as moral citizens, because they are considered to share a culture with non-migrants. Two of the main markers of Sahuayan identity are adoration of the patron saint, Santiago, and the Virgin of Guadalupe. Collective migrant participation in

these religious fiestas underlines not only shared community symbols, but also migrants' subscription to the collectively held normative codes of the Catholic church that often stand in opposition to perceptions of a contaminated and contaminating American culture.

Identity is negotiated in the public space of migrant sending sites like Sahuayo through inclusive and exclusive identity displays such as the parades of the Colonia Sahuayense or sponsoring an ambulance. Identity displays are directed outwards at an audience of non-migrants and other migrants, but they also strengthen a sense of belonging among the participants. These identity displays are inclusive in that they assert a shared concern for Sahuayo that is not diminished by physical absence. At the same time, inclusive identity displays may be purposefully or unintentionally exclusive. Returnees set themselves apart from other Sahuayans when they organize themselves collectively as the "Colony of the North" that serves as a representative of Sahuayans abroad.

Members of the Colony publicly assert a raised class position that they were able to achieve through relative economic success in the United States. Blue-collar workers that are marginalized in the United States along class and ethnic lines can become important leaders in their transborder communities (Goldring 1998; R. Smith 1995). Returning migrants exhibit their status by collectively contracting musicians and buying fireworks for the fiesta. Individual returnees also buy rounds of drinks and throw parties for their neighborhoods. Such displays set migrants apart from non-migrants by creating a common impression that long-term migrants have adopted what are widely perceived as the consumerist, ostentatious values of the United States. Thus, identity displays are paradoxical. A parade that is ostensibly an inclusive identity display may also have the unintended consequence of delegitimizing the Sahuayan-ness of migrants in the eyes of many non-migrant Sahuayans.

Migrant economic participation in the community is another potential legitimization of extra-territorial citizenship claims. Shklar (1991) describes how economic participation has historically been a necessary condition of full citizenship in the United States. Working outside the home and paying taxes are the primary forms of economic participation that legitimate status as a “good” citizen. Economic participation in the form of remittances can legitimate citizenship claims in the context of migration. In sending areas like Sahuayo, remittances support the entire regional economy. Among Sahuayan politicians who accept the principle of extending suffrage in Mexican presidential elections to Mexicans living abroad, migrant remittances are one of the most frequently cited legitimating reasons for this right of citizenship. Non-migrant Sahuayans who support local forms of extra-territorial citizenship for absent Sahuayans also cite the importance of remittances. Remittances are considered a sign of continued interest and involvement in the community.

Economic participation as citizenship legitimization has its limits, however. Migrant economic participation must appear altruistic if that participation is to legitimate citizenship. Migrants must avoid the appearance that they are attempting to “buy” citizenship, because the perception of buying citizenship would violate the moral dimension of citizenship based on affective ties and a shared community identity. Many non-migrant Sahuayan elites take an instrumental view of extra-territorial citizenship. They are willing to accept absent migrant participation in Sahuayan public projects, insofar as migrants provide funding, but they reject a fuller measure of extra-territorial citizenship like the extension of the vote abroad. For this large segment of elites, migrant economic participation is not the *legitimization* of citizenship, but rather the *object* that explains non-migrant elites’ grudging acceptance of a truncated citizenship for migrants.

## **Competing Models of Citizenship**

Extra-territorial citizenship appeals to a Roman-like model of citizenship. Opposing notions of citizenship, asserted by Sahuayans who reject extra-territorial citizenship, appeal to a Greek tradition of civic-republicanism. The extra-territorial model is not Roman-like in the sense of a juridical citizenship, but rather because it shares common features of passivity, citizenship as right, protection of property, and differentiation (Pocock 1998). Like the Roman model, extra-territorial citizenship is relatively passive. Although the extra-territorial model requires the periodic active performance of membership claims through remittances or public identity displays, as the civil-republican model also demands, extra-territorial citizenship is necessarily passive on a daily basis. The ruled do not rule as they would in an Aristotelian system, because they are absent. In the extra-territorial model, citizenship is also a right that is “owned.” Citizens are owed protection by the community of Sahuayans by virtue of their Sahuayan birth. Citizenship is differentiated as well. The individual and the communities to which the individual makes claims negotiate multiple levels of simultaneous citizenships. Sahuayans abroad may be citizens of Santa Ana, California, and the United States, and at the same time be citizens of Sahuayo, Michoacán, and Mexico.

Sahuayans who reject extra-territorial citizenship claims have their own political interests to protect, since migrants can potentially lay claim to political power based on their economic influence. Elites who reject extra-territorial citizenship appeal to the principles of a Greek model of citizenship in which citizenship is participatory, based on duty as well as rights, and territorially bound (Pocock 1998; Oldfield 1998). Many Sahuayan political elites assert that Sahuayans abroad do not have the right to influence public policy in Sahuayo because “they do not know our reality.” For these elites,

citizenship should be based on daily participation in the public life of the *polis*. Political participation cannot be a right without commensurate public duties. Since migrants are physically outside the polity, it is impossible to coerce them into fulfilling their duties. Absent migrants cannot be citizens in an Aristotelian sense by virtue of their absence. Opponents of extra-territorial citizenship may have their own political interests at heart, but they raise important objections about a model of citizenship that emphasizes passive entitlements and rights over obligations. There is also a theoretical tension between the functional and plebiscitarian principles of citizenship that Bendix identifies, since Sahuayan migrants are recognized as a corporate group rather than individuals. Corporate and individual rights generally expand at each other's expense (Bendix 1977). Of course, neither migrants nor hometown elites invoke Aristotle by name, but the Roman and Greek citizenship models are a useful heuristic device for understanding fundamental theoretical principles that are in tension.

### **The Negotiation of Legal Forms of Extra-Territorial Citizenship**

The same principles at play in the negotiation of moral citizenship at the local level may be found in the macro debate over legal forms of citizenship. Mexican citizens abroad do not have the full legal rights of citizenship – most conspicuously the right to vote. Organizations of Mexicans abroad and their allies in Mexico have demanded greater inclusion in the “Mexican nation” based on their Mexican ethnocultural identity, on-going interests in Mexican politics, and economic participation in the national economy via remittances. Over the last decade, the Mexican state has responded to Mexicans living abroad to negotiate some form of extra-territorial citizenship. There are three main instrumental motives that have driven the Mexican state, and the parties controlling or

seeking control of the state apparatus, to build ties to Mexicans abroad: circumventing the reach of competing political parties among Mexicans living in the United States, encouraging Mexicans in the United States to participate in U.S. politics as an ethnic lobby, and stimulating the flow of remittances. A fourth motive is to protect the civil rights of Mexican nationals in a hostile U.S. political environment.

The relationships between Mexican political actors and the Mexican-origin population in the United States changed substantially in the aftermath of the 1988 Mexican presidential elections. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the center-left opposition candidate for president in 1988 who later founded the PRD, drew large crowds of Mexican migrants while campaigning in California and Chicago. Cárdenas appealed to Mexicans to influence the vote of their family members in Mexico and promised emigrants the right to vote from abroad and dual nationality (Jones-Correa 2000). His policies attracted many U.S.-resident Mexicans who had “voted with their feet” by leaving Mexico’s economic and political troubles, which they often blamed on the PRI government (Dresser 1993). Since the election, Mexicans in California have helped the PRD by raising funds for campaign events in California, sending pro-PRD pamphlets to Mexico, and according to the PRI, illegally raising money for PRD candidates in Mexico (Pérez Godoy 1998). Local PRD committees from migrant sending communities also raise funds in the United States, which they say they send to their home communities for non-election expenses.<sup>13</sup>

A former Mexican consul in Los Angeles acknowledged that the 1988 Cárdenas campaign in the United States and subsequent protests against electoral fraud demonstrated the transborder influence of migrants and stimulated the government to reformulate its policy towards Mexicans abroad (Dresser 1993: 94). The network of 45 consulates executed most government programs directed at emigrants. The PRI created a separate

system of Compatriot Aid Committees in U.S. cities in the early 1990s to support the party in open ways that consular agents could not (García-Acevedo 1996). Among the most important state initiatives institutionalizing relations with emigrants is the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad (PACME)<sup>14</sup> created under the Ministry of Foreign Relations in 1990. The PACME has founded cultural institutes in U.S. cities with large Mexican-origin populations and encouraged the formation of hometown associations (González Gutiérrez 1995).

Mexican political leaders from Echeverría to Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) have intermittently attempted to create a 'Mexican American lobby' explicitly modeled on the American Jewish or Cuban lobbies (Santamaría Gómez 1994; de la Garza 1997). President Salinas (1988-1994) took concrete steps to promote a specific policy concern among Chicanos when he urged them to promote the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Galavision, the Spanish-language television affiliate of Televisa, broadcast commercials urging Mexicans in the United States to call their congressional representatives and support NAFTA (Martínez and Ross, forthcoming). Despite ultimate support for NAFTA from Mexican Americans in Congress and some Chicano organizations, "there is no evidence... that Mexican American members of Congress voted for NAFTA because of Mexican lobbying or because they supported Mexican interests" (de la Garza 1997).

The Mexican government's courtship of migrants also is a means to encourage migrant remittances to Mexico. Even state-sponsored projects that are putatively non-political and non-economic, like cultural exchanges, encourage thicker social ties to Mexico that may be expressed in increased remittances. Most remittances are made on the household level, yet they are one of the country's leading sources of foreign exchange

(Lozano Ascencio 1993). A Banco de Mexico report in April 2000 estimated that annual remittances increased from \$3.7 billion in 1995 to almost \$6 billion in 1999. A report released in March 2000 by the National Population Council in Mexico estimated that only three-fourths of the remittance flow was captured by the Banco de Mexico study, suggesting annual remittances of \$8 billion that provided essential economic support to 1.1 million households in Mexico (*SourceMex* 2000).

Mexican consulates have sought to protect their citizens' civil rights in the midst of new U.S. border enforcement strategies that have indirectly caused the deaths of more than 1400 migrants attempting to cross the border illegally from 1995 to 2000 (Cornelius 2000). The Salinas administration also created the *Paisano* (Countryman) Program in 1989 to protect migrants returning to Mexico from needless travel delays and extortion by Mexican police. The Paisano Program has continued under successive administrations. In December 2000, one of Vicente Fox's first acts as president was to tour the northern border cities for two days to "monitor" the return of migrants whom he called "heroes" (*New York Times* 2000).

Responding to demands made by emigrant organizations since the 1988 Cárdenas campaign, Zedillo and the PRI-controlled Congress amended the Constitution in 1996 to allow Mexicans to maintain their Mexican nationality when they become naturalized citizens of another country. Former Mexican nationals can 'recover' their Mexican nationality. Children born abroad to Mexican-born parents also are eligible for dual nationality (Martínez and Ross, forthcoming). About 30,000 U.S. citizens had "renationalized" as Mexicans by October 2000 (Valdez 2000). Dual nationality is not dual citizenship, however.<sup>15</sup> Dual nationals do not have the right to vote, but they do have

property rights in Mexico and other minor advantages from which foreigners are excluded (de la Garza 1997).

The unintended consequence of the state's inclusionary rhetoric allowing dual nationality while excluding dual nationals and even citizens abroad from participation in Mexican electoral politics was to create a 'discursive breach' (Foucault 1969). Mexicans in the United States, encouraged by the center-left Mexican opposition, publicly appealed for the extension of suffrage to Mexicans living abroad through organizations such as the Pro Vote Mexico 2000 Committee (Rivera-Salgado 1999). The PRI feared that Mexicans in the United States would tend to vote for the opposition, yet it could not openly reject extending suffrage without alienating the same migrants it was trying to co-opt.

In July 1996, the Mexican Congress amended the 1917 Constitution to allow Mexicans living abroad to vote in Mexican presidential elections, but only if a secondary election law is passed that orders the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) to organize elections outside the country. According to an IFE report issued in November 1998, 10.7 million Mexican citizens were expected to be abroad on election day in July 2000, 99% of which reside in the United States. Mexican citizens residing abroad are roughly 14% of the total Mexican adult population. The definitional range of 'citizen' extends from Mexican citizens in the United States who already hold a current Mexican voting credential (about 1.5 million persons) to naturalized citizens of other countries and adult children born abroad to Mexican parents (IFE 1998).

The PRI claims to accept the principle of extending suffrage, but the contradictions in its position were publicly revealed in a congressional vote on enabling the vote abroad that was forced by the opposition in June 1999. The enabling legislation passed the opposition-controlled Chamber of Deputies, but the PRI-controlled Senate killed the

measure (*La Jornada* 1999). The PRI based its arguments on technical objections, but it had clearly lost a discursive battle. As in previous elections, Mexican citizens abroad were forced to return to Mexico to vote in the 2000 elections. Opposition presidential candidates Vicente Fox of the PAN and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the PRD campaigned in California in May 2000 asking Mexican migrants to return to Mexico to vote or at least to influence their relatives in Mexico by telephone (Anderson 2000).

To accommodate Mexicans abroad who returned to Mexico to vote in the presidential election, the IFE established 64 special polling sites in the six border states. Each site was limited to 750 ballots, for a total of 48,000 ballots. Special polling sites are set up throughout Mexico to accommodate Mexican citizens who are away from their district of residence on election day, but the number of special booths and ballots is strictly limited to avoid fraud. Unlike regular polling sites in which poll workers and party representatives match voters' identification cards with photographs of all the registered voters in the precinct, special sites do not allow for such controls. The PRD and PAN, who would likely benefit most from increased numbers of special sites along the border, have been wary of increasing the number of special ballots for fear of fraud. Individual migrants and some small caravans traveled from the United States to the special border sites, but according to press reports, the ballots quickly ran out on election day. Citizens in transit within Mexico outnumbered U.S.-based migrants, thus diluting the latter's impact at the ballot box (Fox 2000). According to an exit survey conducted by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte, of voters at the 15 special sites in Tijuana and neighboring Rosarito, only 15% were U.S. residents (Espinoza 2001). Even if some other migrants voted in their districts of residence or at other scattered special poll sites in the interior, the migrant vote was negligible in the sea of 37.6 million ballots that were cast for president (IFE 2000). It is

difficult to judge indirect emigrant influences on family members in sending communities. In at least one PAN stronghold in Michoacán with extremely high rates of emigration (Sahuayo), migrants generally supported Fox but did not appear to make strong partisan appeals to family members or return to Mexico to vote.

For most migrants, returning to Mexico to vote requires a major commitment of time and money. Undocumented migrants are unlikely to return to Mexico specifically to vote since crossing back into the United States illegally involves great expense and physical risk. Most Mexicans in the United States do not have a valid voting credential. To obtain the credential, migrants return to their hometowns and apply at the local IFE office. Since there is a four to six week processing time, many migrants return to the United States before their credential is available. Applicants must pick up the credential in person within two years of the application date.<sup>16</sup> Thus, a U.S.-resident Mexican who wishes to vote must make a series of trips to Mexico planned well in advance to apply for the credential, pick it up, and cast a ballot. Considering the institutional hurdles, it is not surprising that so few emigrants voted.

Even if Mexican citizens were allowed to vote abroad in presidential elections, they could not vote in congressional elections without further changes in the law. Under Mexico's complicated system of congressional representation based on both single and multiple-member districts, voters can only exercise a complete congressional vote in their district of residence. In 2000, PAN legislators introduced a bill to reserve 10 seats in the 500-seat Chamber of Deputies for Mexicans living in the United States, though the measure's support among the PAN leadership is unclear and the vote abroad does not yet exist in any form (Sheridan 2000). PRD activists in California have distributed campaign posters calling for the election of deputies and senators from abroad in the 2003 elections

(author interview 2000). In fact, the creation of an extra-territorial electoral district is an established precedent elsewhere. The Colombian Constituent Assembly created a global extra-territorial district in 1991 to represent Colombians abroad (Guarnizo et al. 1999).

According to the Mexican Constitution, a candidate for deputy or senator must have been in “effective residence” in the state to be represented, or a neighboring state,<sup>17</sup> for at least six months before the election. Yet, several Mexicans who live at least part of the year in the United States ran for deputy in 2000. All three of the PRD candidates lost. Raul Ross Pineda, an activist for the American Friends Service Committee who immigrated to Chicago in 1986, unsuccessfully campaigned in Illinois, Texas, California, and New York for a seat in Veracruz. Florencio Zaragoza, who splits his time between Tucson, Arizona and Guaymas, Sonora lost his bid to represent his Sonoran district. Los Angeles community organizer Jose Jacques Medina lost his bid as a candidate on the PRD’s party list (Claiborne 2000; Steller 2000).

Curiously, the only successful candidate of the four U.S. residents ran for the PRI. Eddie Varon Levy, a 42-year-old Los Angeles legal consultant who has lived in the United States for over twenty years, was the fifth candidate on the PRI’s party list in the Mexico City regional district. He is the first Mexican living abroad to win congressional office, but his election based on a party list can be attributed to his political connections within Mexico rather than to a base of support among Mexicans in the United States. Varon supports the right to vote abroad, however, and says he will represent Mexicans in the United States as well as in the Mexico City area (Olivo and Kraul 2000).

Over forty countries grant their citizens the right to vote abroad, including the United States (Martínez and Ross, forthcoming), but the concepts of dual nationality and voting in Mexican elections from abroad have strong ideological critics in both Mexico and

the United States. For example, note the reaction of a columnist for a newspaper in an area of Michoacán with historically high levels of emigration. “Some unhappy person, who was possibly brainwashed in a Yankee university, had the bad idea that Mexicans who renounce their fatherland and swear loyalty to the flag of the stars and stripes should not lose his Mexican nationality for this felony, but rather should keep intact the rights of citizenship” (Guerrero 1998, my translation). Guerrero concluded that dual nationals were not really Mexicans and would be a tool of the United States to “screw over” Mexico. Opponents of the right to vote abroad claim that migrants “live a different reality” and therefore do not deserve inclusion in Mexican politics. Negative attitudes towards Mexicans who have emigrated to the United States and their U.S.-born descendents are common. In a 1997 survey of Mexico City metropolitan residents, 47 percent of respondents said they had a “negative or very negative” impression of Mexicans who go to work in the United States (cited in González Gutiérrez 1998).<sup>18</sup>

Although outside the scope of this paper, the potential for mass participation of U.S.-based Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in Mexican politics raises political and normative questions about their simultaneous participation in US politics. Such questions have been raised from widely divergent points on the U.S. political spectrum. Some fear that U.S. residents’ participation in Mexican politics will supplement rather than complement participation in U.S. politics and provoke a nativist backlash (Ayon 1996). Others raise the specter of immigrant disloyalty and a threat to “the national interest” (Geyer 2000; Huntington 1997). Yet far from participating in dual political systems, millions of Mexicans today participate in neither. Mexican migrants who live in the United States without U.S. citizenship cannot vote in American elections. They hold formal

Mexican citizenship, but they cannot exercise the full rights of that citizenship either. They are disenfranchised in both countries.

### **Conclusions: Expanding the Mexican “Nation”**

In their prescription for a research agenda for the study of ‘transnational migration’, Portes and others divide transnational activities into a typology of economic, political, and socio-cultural practices (1999). While such distinctions are useful, it is also important to consider the interactions between different kinds of practices. Studying citizenship as a process rather than a fixed status allows me to show the linkages between identity, social projects, economic activity, and political negotiations. Extra-territorial citizenship cannot be understood if it is studied only using a narrow definition of politics. The debate over the extension of suffrage to Mexicans abroad is an easily recognized form of extra-territorial citizenship negotiation, but a broader analysis of transborder practices reveals more subtle negotiations of citizenship at the level of the cross-border locality.

There is a further linkage between the macro-legal and micro-moral forms of citizenship. The experiences of migrants in Sahuayo, Jiquilpan, and El Granjenal suggest that except in transborder communities with an exceptional degree of social capital, it is difficult to carry out transborder projects effectively without a formal organization such as an HTA. The most effective HTA projects are accomplished through institutionalized cooperation with the Mexican government at the municipal, state, and federal levels. Broader debates about the extra-territorial rights of Mexican citizens and government responses such as the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad create new opportunities for asserting citizenship and carrying out projects on the local level.

Over the last decade, emigrant organizations and opposition Mexican political parties have sought to redefine Mexican nationality to allow emigrant inclusion in the political community. In his National Development Plan 1995-2000, President Ernesto Zedillo declared, “the Mexican Nation extends beyond the territory contained within its borders” (González Gutiérrez 1997). Zedillo’s redefinition of “the Mexican nation” went beyond earlier references to emigrants as the “México de afuera” constituting part of the Mexican ‘people’. It is difficult to conceptually distinguish between ‘people’ and ‘nation’, but nationalism implies a form of politics (Breuilly 1994). Framing Mexicans in the United States in national rather than cultural terms creates a discursive opening for their participation in the Mexican national polity. Zedillo’s rhetoric and legal reforms suggest a conceptualization of Mexican nationhood that places more emphasis on descent.<sup>19</sup> One of the architects of the PACME, Carlos González Gutiérrez, has written that the Mexican state will be able to “better the living standards of the communities abroad” and “generate support in its diaspora for development of the homeland” when “people of Mexican descent [feel] they belong to the Mexican nation” (González Gutiérrez 1998). “To support the ethnic mobilization of immigrants in terms of lines of origin and ‘compatriotism’ is one of the most powerful resources available to the government of Mexico to defend and stimulate the *mexicanidad* of its absent sons” (González Gutiérrez 1995: 89, my translation).

Territory is still an important component of Mexican nationality, since a tie to birth in the territory cannot stretch more than two generations. For example, U.S.-born grandchildren of Mexican nationals are not automatically eligible for Mexican nationality. Mexican nationality also remains available via naturalization to immigrants from around the world. Ethnicity and territoriality are not mutually exclusive principles of nationality. The territorial principle is horizontally bounded, legalistic, and emphasizes citizenship,

while the ethnic principle emphasizes descent ties. ‘Nations’ are conceived in both territorial and ethnic principles, though “given nations will exhibit ethnic and territorial components in varying proportions at particular moments of their history” (A. Smith 1986: 149)

Vicente Fox has extended Zedillo’s *völkisch* conceptualization of “the Mexican Nation” to assert not only that such a nation exists, but that members of that nation outside of Mexico should be full participants in national life. In a speech in Los Angeles in November 2000, Fox called for “the active participation of the entire Mexican nation, defined in the broadest sense of the word. ... Mine will be the first Mexican administration to sincerely honor the ties that bind people of Mexican descent to the United States. I will hear the needs and respect the dreams of all those who share our Mexican heritage, here in Los Angeles and in Mexico” (McDonnell 2000). The instrumental motivation behind these appeals is clear. During a March 2001 visit to Santa Ana, California to inaugurate a center to promote California-Mexico trade, Fox invoked an economic definition of Mexican nationality in front of a crowd of 3000 migrants and local elites. “Mexico’s gross product, together with the gross product of Mexicans generated in United States, makes us the 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world” (author field notes 2001).

While acknowledging the roots of contemporary transborder political action in practices initiated by non-state actors in the United States and Mexico, the official discourse today can be conceived usefully as state-sponsored transborder nationalism. It is also a dual nationalism. Carlos González Gutiérrez argues that “for Mexico, the ultimate goal in approaching the Mexican community abroad must not be that of stopping the process of aculturalization of Mexican Americans nor of aspiring to creating a situation whereby, like in other countries, emotional attachment to the homeland takes precedence

over strategic rational calculations and the self-interest of different sectors of the diaspora” (1998: 5). Nationhood in this view is not necessarily based on culture, or at least the “aculturalization” of Mexicans into something other than exclusively ‘Mexican’ does not strip them of their Mexicanness. Fox has encouraged U.S.-resident Mexicans to become U.S. citizens and integrate themselves into U.S. life. At a November 2000 speech in Los Angeles, Fox told an audience of Mexicans that immigrants “want their children to learn English, they want to graduate from college, they want to live in integrated neighborhoods, they want to dream the American dream and wake up as citizens.” “I share those hopes,” Fox said. “We have no desire to interfere in the powerful processes that tie Mexican immigrants to this country” (McDonnell 2000).

The Mexican government may stress that it is not interfering in processes of integration or naturalization partly as a rhetorical maneuver to protect itself from charges of violating U.S. sovereignty. Nationalism is a discursive formation (Calhoun 1997), however, and state-sponsored changes in the public discourse change the form of nationalism.<sup>20</sup> In the national formulations expressed by Fox and González Gutiérrez, the interests of the Mexican state are best served by allowing Mexicans in the United States to adopt not only dual nationality in its legal aspects, but also identificational aspects of dual nationalism.

State-sponsored dual nationalism carries political risks. It is difficult to execute a policy that encourages emigrants to integrate into U.S. life to a degree sufficient to become an effective force in U.S. politics while simultaneously maintaining or developing interests, contacts, and investments in Mexico. Further, many migrants perceive Mexico’s legal recognition of dual nationality without recognition of dual citizenship as an inconsistent position. PRD legislators have argued that Mexicans living abroad have the right to vote because Mexican politics affect their destinies. Migrants should be able to demand

effectively that the Mexican government respond to U.S. immigration policies. According to this argument, migrants can protect themselves from abuses in the United States by engaging in politics in Mexico. Historically, the PAN has offered only tepid support for the right to vote abroad (Pérez Godoy 1998), though Fox publicly supports the right (McDonnell 2000).

A critical set of questions is whether Fox will attempt to comply with his promise to extend the right to vote abroad, the degree to which he will expend political capital in that effort, and the eventual outcome. The PAN and the PRD have the necessary votes to pass legislation in both houses of Congress if they are willing to form an *ad hoc* coalition. If Fox were to orchestrate the enabling legislation, emigrant voters in the 2006 presidential elections would likely reward his party. Many *panistas* in Congress are unenthusiastic about the measure, however, and some oppose it.<sup>21</sup>

What are the likely political consequences if Fox's inclusive rhetoric is not followed by a good faith effort to extend suffrage abroad? The vote abroad movement in the United States can apply moral suasion, but to pass legislation it must rely on political allies within Mexico. Its main ally, the PRD, was weakened severely in the 2000 elections. PRD representation in the Chamber of Deputies fell from 125 to 53 seats (Urrutia 2000). Most emigrant organizations have limited political leverage outside their sending communities, and there is not an umbrella organization of emigrant groups. The International Coalition of Mexicans Abroad formed in 2000 and collapsed along internal divisions of Mexican party politics the following year (Notimex 2001). Newly formed organizations such as the coalition of HTAs in Los Angeles could become more important actors. A coalition based on the vote abroad movement forced the Mexican government to withdraw its plan to collect large deposits of money for bringing U.S. cars into Mexico in 1999 (J. Fox 2000).

Emigrant organizations could refuse to cooperate with the Mexican government on joint public works or investment projects, but at least until now, these projects have represented a fraction of total remittances (Lozano Ascencio 1993). Most remittances are made on the household level and are less subject to political bargaining. Emigrant organizations have few ways to directly apply pressure on the Mexican government.

However, the high-profile attention Fox has shown to emigrants and their mutual interests on questions of efficient remittance mechanisms, investment, public works projects, and immigration policy suggest that a more cooperative relationship between emigrants and the Mexican government is likely. Fox appointed a U.S. citizen raised in Guanajuato as a Cabinet-level director of a new office of migrant affairs. One of Fox's first acts as president was to meet with hundreds of emigrants and Chicanos in Mexico City (J. Smith 2000). If Fox's emigrant policies appear excessively partisan, however, he runs the risk of appearing to be little different from previous PRI politicians toward whom emigrants and Chicanos have tended to be very critical. Many Mexican emigrants have been reticent to participate in consular-sponsored activities because they view the consulate as a partisan tool (González Gutiérrez 1995, Fitzgerald 2000). If consular officials appear to be partisan panistas, emigrant participation is likely to be suppressed. However, the perceived depoliticization of the consulates would probably promote the strength of programs like the PACME and proposals for emigrant investment like the new *Padrino* (Godfather) program (J. Smith 2001). A substantial level of emigrant investment facilitated by a PAN government would not only strengthen the PAN's favor among emigrants, but would provide emigrants with a strong reason to engage in Mexican politics in order to protect their material investments.

When Vicente Fox won the Mexican presidency in 2000, he pledged to govern on behalf of “118 million Mexicans,” including the 18 million people of Mexican origin living in the United States (J. Smith 2000). Although Mexican migrants increasingly settle permanently in the United States (Marcelli and Cornelius 2001) and express less interest in Mexican politics with length of residence (de la Garza and DeSipio 1998), many first-generation migrants express an interest in a greater political voice in Mexico (IFE (Instituto Federal Electoral). 1998). They are unlikely to be satisfied for a Mexican president to speak “on their behalf” until they have negotiated greater rights of extra-territorial citizenship that permit them to take part in the presidential selection.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> During the course of this on-going research interest, I have greatly benefited from discussions with Wayne Cornelius, James Holston, Yen Espiritu, Alvaro Ochoa Serrano, Gail Mummert, David Lopez, Rogers Brubaker, Roger Waldinger, David Ayon, and Gary Segura. I am grateful to the Tinker Foundation; the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego; and the Centro de Estudios Antropológicos at the Colegio de Michoacán for their support.

<sup>2</sup> For a cautionary note on the epistemological pitfalls of “positivist taxonomies” measuring the scale or intensity of transnationalism, see Smith and Guarnizo 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, state borders have been periodically altered through processes of inter-state conflict or state disintegration, and some borders are disputed, but I emphasize their fixedness and clear definition in contrast to the far more fluid and conceptual borders of nation.

<sup>4</sup> Brubaker’s original concept of ‘transborder nationalisms’ refers to the nationalisms of “external national homelands” like Russia, which promoted a shared nationalism with Russian minorities stranded outside Russian borders following the collapse of the Soviet Union. “A state becomes an external national “homeland” when cultural or political elites construe certain residents and citizens of other states as co-nationals, as fellow members of a single transborder nation, and when they assert that this shared nationhood makes the state responsible, in some sense, not only for its own citizens but also for ethnic co-nationals who live in other states and possess other citizenships” (Brubaker 1996). Migrants typically choose to cross state borders rather than awakening to find themselves excluded from the ‘homeland’ by adjustments to state territory, but the basic concept of transborder nationalism can be appropriated to describe certain migration contexts.

<sup>5</sup> It is possible for migrants to consider themselves members of more than two ‘nations’. Such a scenario could be described as ‘pluri-nationalism’ (rather than ‘multinationalism’ which already has a distinct, though conceptually muddled, usage that more accurately refers to multi-*state* arrangements like ‘multinational peacekeeping’). Given that in most migration contexts, migrants are dual nationalists at most, the latter term suffices.

<sup>6</sup> For a skeptical look at ‘postnational’ citizenship that emphasizes states’ autonomy, see Joppke 1999.

<sup>7</sup> A municipio is roughly equivalent to a U.S. county.

<sup>8</sup> The 1990 census lists a population of 1006 in El Granjenal, which includes absent migrants who have a spouse in the village (INEGI 1990). The *Los Angeles Times* estimated there were 3000 people from El Granjenal in Santa Ana in 1997 (Cleeland 1997). Based on voluntary consular registration data at the Mexican consulate in Santa Ana and data from the 1980 census, I estimate a population of 3000 Sahuayans in Santa Ana. Migrants from Jiquilpan estimate that there are several thousand Jiquilpenses in Inglewood.

<sup>9</sup> The PRI is the then-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, the PRD is the center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution, and the PAN is the center-right National Action Party.

<sup>10</sup> Annual remittances to Zacatecan migrant family members were \$500 million during the same period (Guarnizo 1998).

<sup>11</sup> The *encargado del orden* is the highest-ranking official in the village. The *suplente* is his second-in-command and assumes the role of the *encargado* in his absence.

<sup>12</sup> See R. Smith 1995 for a conspicuous exception.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with PRD activists in Anaheim, California, June 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Programa de Atención a la Comunidad Mexicana en el Extranjero

<sup>15</sup> According to anecdotal evidence from sending communities in Michoacán, some children become *de facto* dual citizens, though neither the U.S. nor Mexican governments recognize that status. A child born in the United States automatically becomes a U.S. citizen. Some parents then fraudulently register the child's birth in Mexico so that he or she can have Mexican citizenship as well. The Colegio de la Frontera Norte survey of special polling sites in the Tijuana area on election day in 2000 found that among U.S. residents who voted, 10% were U.S. citizens. They were *de facto* dual citizens (Espinoza 2001).

<sup>16</sup> Interview with IFE official in Jiquilpan, Michoacán, July 2000.

<sup>17</sup> There are exceptions to this rule, but they do not include international migration.

<sup>18</sup> A survey in an area of Mexico with higher emigration rates might find different attitudes. Historically, Mexico City has not been a major sending area, although migrants are increasingly likely to originate there (Marcelli and Cornelius 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Neither the nation nor the state have been "deterritorialized", according to Basch et al.'s formulation (1994). Rather, territory has become a *less important* component of nationality vis-à-vis descent.

<sup>20</sup> There is not a single 'Mexican nationalism', but the forms discussed here are particularly salient in the discourse of government, transnational civil society, and the mass media.

<sup>21</sup> Other measures, such as allowing Mexicans to obtain voting credentials at Mexican consulates and increasing the number of special border polling places and ballots, would encourage higher emigrant electoral participation without allowing Mexicans to vote abroad.

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